

Community Presbyterian Church

1100 College Avenue

January 2023

Happy New Year!!

Pastor's Corner



I was intrigued earlier this week when I heard about an advance in Artificial Intelligence that allows people to interact with a computer using plain language, in the form of a “text message,” and the computer responds with a written response that sounds remarkably like it was written by a person, rather than a machine. (Yes, I can be a bit nerdy at times.)

And the really cool thing is that it is open to the public to try! (If you have a bit of nerd in you, too, it's called “Chat GPT” and you can access it at: chat.openai.com).

So of course, I had to try it. I won't go into a lot of detail, and it's really important to remember that this answer was written by a machine, regardless of how human-sounding it is. The questions surrounding how to utilize information like this are deep and profound, and it is imperative that the church engage actively and confidently in the cultural, legal and ethical discussions about AI. But that's a topic for another time.

I simply want to share a question I asked, and the response I received.

Question: *What is the future of the Presbyterian Church (USA)?*

Response:

It is difficult to predict the future of any organization with certainty, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) is

no exception. However, there are a number of trends and factors that may influence the direction and development of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the coming years.

One factor that may shape the future of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the overall trend of declining membership in many mainline Protestant denominations, including the Presbyterian Church (USA). This trend has been ongoing for several decades and may continue into the future.

Another factor that may influence the future of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the ongoing debate within the denomination about a range of social and theological issues, such as the ordination of LGBTQ+ individuals and the role of women in the church. These debates may lead to further divisions within the denomination or may result in changes to the denomination's policies and practices.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is also facing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted many aspects of church life and may continue to do so for some time.

Despite these challenges, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has a long history of adapting to changing circumstances and working to fulfill its mission of spreading the message of Jesus Christ. It is likely that the denomination will continue to evolve and adapt in the future as it seeks to meet the needs of its members and fulfill its mission in the world.

I was somewhat surprised at how concise and accurate a response this is. It is also, however, neither insightful nor imaginative, and therefore of limited usefulness to the Church in envisioning our future. But it can be helpful, I think, in offering an objective, easy-to-understand summary of our history, as well as some logical steps to take to address past trends.

Most interesting to me was the positive—even hopeful—conclusion about the future of our denomination. Once again, it's important to recognize that this is not the faith-based hope the Gospel calls us to, but the kind of deep statistical analysis that only computers are capable of.

All of this is simply to say that our denomination—and our church—have some significant challenges ahead of us. But there are also plenty of reasons to be optimistic about our future. Not because a computer tells us so, but because our Gospel-hope calls us so.

Although this is my last Pastor's Corner as your "official" Pastor, it's not a farewell by any means. I suspect you'll be hearing from me in the future...

Happy New Year, and may God's blessings continue to be with all of us as we continue to follow God's call into our future.

Pastor John

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*One*

*One* tree can start a forest;  
*One* smile can begin a friendship;  
*One* hand can lift a soul;  
*One* word can frame the goal;  
*One* candle can wipe out darkness;  
*One* laugh can conquer gloom;  
*One* touch can show you care;  
*One* life can make the difference,  
be that *One* today.

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that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Christ.

An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2003, 94-95) The word "epiphany" (from the Greek epiphaneia or theophaneia) means "appearance" or "manifestation" of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness. ... Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God's true Light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

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## So Many Casseroles....So Little Counter-Space

Characters:

A Catholic Lady; A Presbyterian Lady;  
A Baptist Lady

Three women went into the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said, "why should we let you in?"

The Catholic woman said, "I use my rosary beads and say my prayers several times a day.

"Okay, you can come in." He asked the 2nd woman the same question.

She said, "Well, I'm a Baptist and I've memorized lots of scriptures.

## January 6



Epiphany is the celebration of God's manifestation or self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate

the revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God's covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star

"Okay, come on in," St. Peter asked the 3rd woman the same question and she said. "Well, I'm a Presbyterian and I brought a casserole!"

– Contributed by Marjorie Martin

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**From our 2022 Bazaar Committee:** There are no adequate words to express our appreciation for all everyone did for this year's Bazaar. Each and every person that baked, crafted, shopped, cleaned, set-up, took down, and came for lunch was an integral part of our success. The numbers are not totally in just yet, but I'm pretty confident we went to almost, or over, \$8,000! The Raffle tickets set records for the amount of sales and the winners are thrilled!

**Blackstone Grill**, donated by Ace Hardware, was won by **Paul Carpenter**

**Cord of wood**, donated by Karl & Heidi Scott, was won by **Mark & Debbie Brown**

**Pie-A-Month**, donated by Clark Carpenter, was won by **Bob & Debbie Martinson**

**Archies IGA \$100 gift certificate** was won by **Cyndie Welch**

**Harvest Food \$100 gift certificate** was won by **Lonnie Klein**

**The handmade quilt throw**, made by & donated by Bonnie Scott, was won by **Boni Scheuller**

**T.O.P.S. Basket**, donated by the Take Off Pounds Sensibly group, was won by **Pete Nemeth**

**40# of beef**, donated by Bill & Kay Cowin, was won by **Chris Sexton**

**2 900# round bales of hay**, donated by Dennis & Pinky Humphrey, was won by

**Carrie Scott**

**Celebrate St. Maries basket** was won by **Jan Rapp**.

Donors were:

208 Bakery, Barks and Bubbles, Blue Goose Sporting Goods, Casa de Oro, Country Fair/Timber Country, Fast Eddies, Grub Box, Haircut Central, Les Schwab, Pampered Feet, Paperhouse, Sage Works Massage, Shift 'n Grind, St. Joe Sport Shop, St. Maries Floral & Gifts.

**Top bidders for the Silent Auction items were:**

**Noritake china** - donated by Emma McLaughlin's estate  
Ginny Oakes

**Box of handmade cards** - donated by Boni Schueller  
Penny Carpenter

**Osterizer mixer** - donated by Kim Ferrell  
Lynn Linnemeyer

**Dutch Oven** - donated by Pinky Humphrey  
Cindy Moe

**Coffee/Tea basket** - donated by Sally Grant  
Penny Carpenter

**Travel road kit/fire extinguisher** - donated by Les Schwab  
Ellen Hinton

**Large wreath** - donated by Ginnie Oakes  
Lynn Linnemeyer;

**2 hand carved duck decoys** - donated by Beverly McCuaig  
Ginny Oakes

**Quilt kit** - donated by Beverly Linn  
Penny Carpenter.

We served over 100 people for lunch and had walk-in visitors all day long! So many happy smiles, hugs, and great comments about how good it was to see everyone! Thank you all for being a part of a fabulous event.

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Where else can a person live where people are truly concerned about each other?



Where else do you have people at the store (who have hair as gray as my own) want to walk you to your car to make sure you don't fall down.

The Sheriff's wife delivers my mail with a smile, people stop if you are trying to cross the street (even if you are not at a crosswalk).

and there 's a younger couple who is willing to make sure you can go into the "big" city to see a play every now and then.

A utility company has office personnel who come to the curb to get your payment.

The people at the bank actually know your name at the drive thru.

I could hardly believe it when my dentist was so sorry that snow covered my car while they worked on my teeth - when I went out to leave - here she was going to sweep off my car.

So many things make me thankful. Let's have a wonderful, peaceful New Year.

I am sure there are other towns. But I am glad I am in St. Maries, Idaho.

Marjorie Martin

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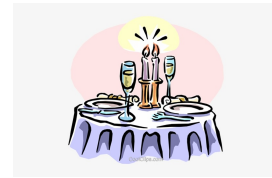
**NEXT BAZAAR MEETING
JANUARY 13TH
10 A.M.
IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY**

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**1ST CORINTHIANS 13  
(A Christmas Version)**

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows,

strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.



If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozen of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.



If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata, but do not focus on those I love the most, I have missed the point.



...In other words,

Love stops the cooking to hug a child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the spouse.



Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust.

**But the gift of love will endure.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere, who like to be tickled, who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants, who sneak Popsicles before supper.....

And we pray for those who never get dessert, who watch their parents watch them die, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser, whose monsters are real...

We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses & fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish, who cover themselves with Band-aids & sing off-key, who slurp their soup...

And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime, who will eat anything, who have never seen a dentist, who aren't spoiled by anybody, who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep...

– Ina J. Hughes

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Worship is more than singing songs to God; it's investing in our relationship with him, even when we don't feel like it or when circumstances are difficult.

Brian Johnson  
*When God Becomes Real*



I think parents of teenagers should get a gold star at the end of each day for making hundreds of hard decisions that are in the best interest of our teen's well-being, safety, future, and happiness – all while our kids complain, tell us that we're "the only parent" and give us the cold shoulder because they're convinced our goal in life is to make their life miserable

*Parenting teens ain't for the faint.....*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Last year is gone.

Not all of our family and friends made it.

Never take for granted the people you love.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**\*\*\* January 8\*\*\***  
Annual meeting  
The Reverend Ted Mattie

**\*\*\* January 15\*\*\***  
Ordination and Installation  
of Elders and Deacons

Potluck and  
Farewell to the Reverend John Owen

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*Psalm 107:1*

*O, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.*



## PAUL ADDRESSES THE AREOPAGUS WORD SEARCH

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| I | U | E | F | I | L | V | U | L | I | V | E | R | W | L |
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| A | Y | H | I | M | C | W | P | I | O | E | N | S | L | N |
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| L | I | O | D | L | I | K | E | R | K | N | N | N | U | U |
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ALLOTTED  
BEING  
EARTH  
GIVES  
HUMAN  
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NEEDED  
RELIGIOUS  
STONE

APPOINTED  
BOUNDARIES  
EVERYTHING  
GOLD  
IMAGE  
MADE  
OFFSPRING  
REPENT  
TEMPLES

AREOPAGUS  
BREATH  
FEEL  
HANDS  
IMAGINATION  
MANKIND  
PAUL  
RESURRECTION  
UNKNOWN GOD

ASSURANCE  
DIVINE  
FIND  
HIM  
JUDGE  
MIDST  
PERCEIVE  
SEEK

ATHENS  
DWELLING  
FIXED  
HOPE  
LIFE  
MOVE  
PLACE  
SILVER

The Aeropagus of Athens, also known as Mars Hill, is located just northwest of the Acropolis. Basically, it's a small mountain of marble where people met. During the Classical period, it was used as an assembly place for judicial tribunals for major crimes. When Paul was in Athens, the Aeropagus had also become a popular gathering place to discuss and debate ideas. The council of the Aeropagus was composed of 100 members, including philosophers, scholars, and former officials of Athens.

According to Acts, Chapter 17, it was here at the Aeropagus that Paul engaged the "professional thinkers" of Athens.